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ABSTRACT

This unit addresses the questions of how and why people create order in a world whose randomness and order are for individuals to interpret. This unit uses the Han Dynasty of China as an example of one country's attempt to create such order and unite China successfully for over 400 years. The activities in this unit examine order in politics, in society, in human relationships, in the relationship to the land, in music, and writing. The six activities include: (1) "The Ruler"; (2) "Music in Han China"; (3) "The Scholar-Official"; (4) "Agriculture"; (5) "The Virtuous Order"; and (6) "Order in Language." A closing activity focuses on "Order Around Us." An 18-item bibliography concludes the document. (EH)

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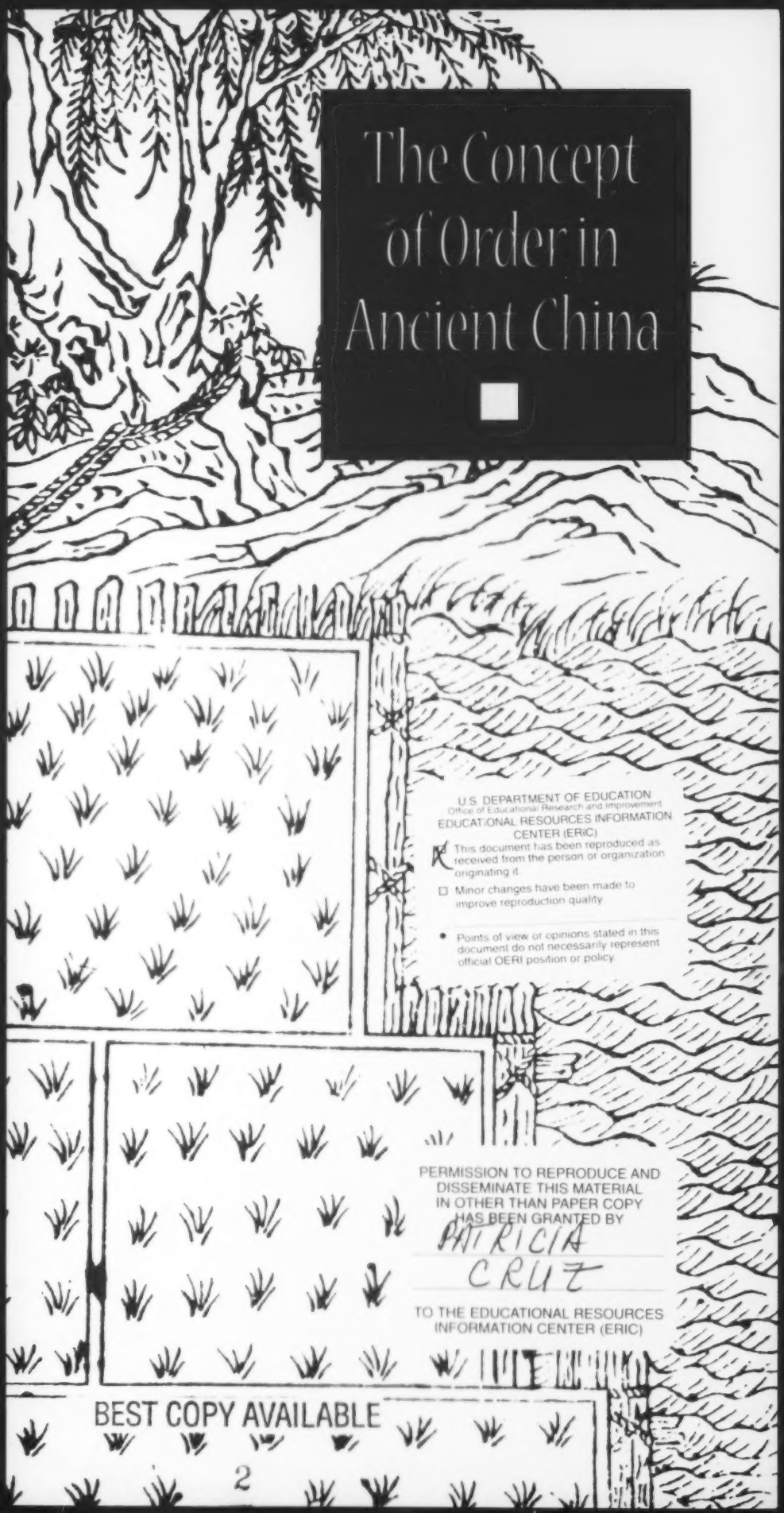
# The Concept of Order in Ancient China



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# THE CONCEPT OF ORDER IN ANCIENT CHINA

A Curriculum Unit for History and Social Studies
Grades 6-9

Developed by Adrian Chan and Richard Chu
Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education (SPICE)
Institute for International Studies (IIS)

in cooperation with the

California International Studies Project
Stanford University School of Education

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*Unit Introduction*

# THE CONCEPT OF ORDER IN ANCIENT CHINA

## Rationale

This unit addresses a very simple question, a fact of life for all human societies. How and why do we create order in a world whose randomness and order are ours to interpret? What religious, political, economic, philosophical, and other approaches has humankind adopted throughout history? How do these approaches work, and what is their purpose? This unit attempts to give us a taste of one country's answer. Our focus is the Han Dynasty of China, the empire which, during the time of the ancient Roman empire, was able to unite China successfully for an extended period of time (over 400 years), after its predecessor, the Qin Dynasty, first united the whole of China in 221 B.C. but lasted only 15 years.

How was the notion of *order* central to life in China during the Han Dynasty? The activities contained in this unit examine order in politics, in society, in human relationships, in the relationship to the land, in music, and writing. These six activities provide the conceptual redundancy students need in order to expand their understanding of the concept of order. Resources using a variety of multiple abilities are provided in order to make the content accessible to a wide range of students.

## The Han Dynasty

The fact that modern-day Chinese people refer to themselves as the "People of Han" is testament to the importance and influence of the Han Dynasty. Established by Liu Bang (the victorious general in a series of rebellions that broke out after the death of first emperor of Qin) in 202 B.C., it can be compared to Ancient Rome in its length, power, prestige, and historical significance. This success was based on a theoretically absolutist, centralized and monarchical, yet virtuous and ethical system of government that achieved its strength and longevity by being less severe than its Qin predecessor in such areas as punishment and taxation, thereby winning it the people's loyalty and the "Mandate of Heaven." This mandate theoretically placed the Chinese dynasties in command over all humankind. To keep in step with the forces of Heaven, the emperor was required to act as an example of virtue and alignment with the cosmic forces of nature. This was measured by his success in keeping (or establishing) harmony in nature and society.

Such moral aspirations reflect the prevalence of Confucian thought, which provided guidelines for behavior between the officials and the people, as well for behavior among family members. These familial relations were used by the imperial family to retain their powerful position—the government's patriarchal relation to the people was analogous to a man's relation to his family, and so by supporting the

governmental structure a man was supporting his own right to familial power.

Although Confucius himself stated that ethics were preferable to law, the Han government made his ideas on proper rituals and etiquette the official state philosophy. These ideas were perpetuated from one generation of officials to the next by an educational system organized under Emperor Wu, which gave many lower bureaucrats a Confucian education they later used to pass the exam necessary for entering government service. This process was the early predecessor to the modern merit-based-selection Civil Service system, which did not begin in the West for another 2000 years after its start in the Han Dynasty. The Chinese imperial system's longevity in comparison to all other empires can be explained in part by its scholar-officials; their roles as civil administrators gave educated men places of responsibility and honor in government, which ensured that they would support the state rather than oppose it.

The 5th-3rd centuries B.C. was an important time for the development of ethical, political and scientific theories. These schools of thought, as well as religion, enabled people to better understand the world and their place in it by providing them with a spiritual order. An important concept which emphasizes harmony is *Yin* (female, dark, cold) and *Yang* (male, light, heat), two forces with complementary power that direct the world's creation and its natural processes. *Yin* and *Yang* exercise their power through the five elements, or types of energy: metal, wood, water, fire, and earth. The rulers of the Han Dynasty not only subscribed to these ways of thinking, but also utilized one of the five elements—earth—to legitimate their authority, by asserting that they represented powerful elements and using the corresponding color (yellow) for ceremonies and display.

The need for order, though it was primarily the responsibility of the emperor, was visible in other areas of life in Ancient China. In agriculture, for example, a certain kind of order was reflected in the *cultivation* of the land. Where the nomadic tribes outside the territory of the Han Dynasty did not have settled and systematic agricultural methods, the Han Chinese did. The latter were leaders in irrigation and in the use of farming implements (e.g. the plow, winnower, and granary). Systematic agricultural methods also helped maintain economic and social stability. Expansion and growth of the empire's size paralleled these developments in thought, agriculture, and culture. Emperor Wu greatly extended the Empire, and through control over Central Asia significantly increased trade with the West. This was very profitable for China, whose technology in certain areas was much more advanced than those of other countries. Such technical advances include the manufacturing of silk, water-powered mills, shoulder collars for horses, iron casting, and the development of paper and porcelain.

Ironically, the very reasons Emperor Wu was able to bring the Han Dynasty to the height of its power—several wars and a massive canal-building program—were the cause of its decline. The downward turn began in the first century B.C. because of financial crisis; all of the dynasty's great undertakings were simply too expensive. Fiscal problems

were alleviated for a while by reinstituting state monopolies and licensing systems, giving the government a monopoly on products sold for large profits. This plan only helped temporarily because of other factors contributing to the government's loss of income. The rich and powerful families lived on untaxed estates, and when the government further raised the taxes of peasants who already had less land and wealth than their ancestors because of population growth, problems escalated into large scale revolts in 22 B.C.

Wang Mang, who usurped the throne in 8 A.D., tried to enact governmental reforms but eventually lost the support of the powerful families and of the people, and his rule soon ended. His rule is regarded as the transition between the two periods of the Han Dynasty: the Early Han and Late Han. The Late Han Dynasty began under Guang Wu Di, who descended from the Han imperial family. He declared himself emperor in 25 A.D. Since wars had destroyed the powerful aristocracy and landowners, he was able build a powerful central administration like the Early Han.

However, the Late Han never achieved the Early Han's financial strength, and problems such as a biased merit system, corrupt emperors and officials, and three decades of Daoist rebellions combined to end the dynasty. In its last years, the empire disintegrated into three divisions, with each division ruled by contending rivals of power. The end came in 220 A.D., when one of the rivals defeated the others and named his dynasty Wei.

## Unit Goals

- to expand students' knowledge and understanding of the concept of order
- to promote an understanding of how the ancient Chinese viewed and constructed order in their lives
- to evaluate the importance of order in people's lives
- to make connections between students' own experiences of order and the cases presented in the unit

## Unit Framework

This unit is designed primarily for teachers teaching World History and Social Studies, Grades 6 - 9 levels. This unit might begin after a discussion of the warring states and the Qin empire, which was responsible, among other things, for the Great Wall, the burning of the books, and the burying of scholars, prior to 200 B.C.

Teachers could use this unit to emphasize the extent to which Confucius' ideas were officially recognized during the Han Dynasty. Teachers could also demonstrate to their students the advancement of life in ancient China. Ancient China's philosophies, science, agriculture, and bureaucracy were very well developed over two millennia ago. Inventions such as casting iron and the plow were not brought to Europe until much later. It was over 1400 years, for example, before the Chinese plow was touted for its advantages over European plows. Perhaps not unlike Christianity in the later Roman empire, virtuous teachings of Confucius and Lao Zi and some of their followers exercised a great deal of influence over the common population. The teacher could emphasize the manner in which Confucius sought to keep order in the family and

the society through his appeal to essential human virtue. The unit's activities show the ways in which order was achieved in other aspects of life.

## Group Work

This design of *The Concept of Order in Ancient China* is based on many years of research in the Stanford School of Education by Dr. Elizabeth Cohen, and more recently Dr. Rachel Lotan, on how to increase student access to learning through group work. This research by The Program for Complex Instruction led to the development of a teaching approach and a model for curriculum materials. The teaching approach itself is a complex one and involves intensive staff development for full implementation. These materials are not designed to introduce that approach to the novice. They do, however, fit the model for curriculum materials and may be useful to teachers using the complex instruction approach. It is our hope that material developed in this way will also be useful to teachers using other cooperative, small group teaching strategies.

Group work units contain 6-8 activities organized around a big idea, central question, or major concept of a discipline. Students rotate through a series of group activities designed to stimulate thinking and discussion about the big idea. When students report the results of their investigations, the teacher needs to ask questions that probe the students' understanding, make connections among the different activities, and address the fundamental content of the unit.

At the heart of these curriculum materials are resource materials which draw heavily on primary sources and provide students with greater access to the academic content of the unit. When students examine photographs or listen to tapes in addition to textual material, they have increased access to the learning task. Even students who cannot read at grade level will participate more.

Each activity includes a group project that is multi-dimensional and encourages the use of multi-media. These projects give more students the opportunity to contribute to the success of the group and demonstrate and be recognized for their own competence and understanding of the content. Increased participation is related to increased learning. These materials combine a group project which reinforces the students' interdependence and an individual report which holds students individually accountable.

An important feature of this curriculum model is the open-ended nature of the questions. Most questions do not have one right or wrong answer and the group products also depend on the group's decision. This design feature contributes to the development of higher-order thinking skills.

In the *Opening Activity*, students discuss the different types of order they see around them. They reflect on the importance of order and the methods with which different societies used to maintain order.

At the core of the unit are six activities that specifically address the big question yet focus on different aspects of Han society. Each activity includes a section for the teacher with background information on the topic, extension questions to assist the teacher in debriefing the presentations, and a list of related issues to serve as further research or discussion items. The activity also includes a set of cards for the students:



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an *Activity Card*, which includes background information, questions, and a task the group must complete; a set of *Resource Card(s)*, which are needed to compete the task; and an *Individual Report*, which serves to enforce individual accountability and to give the teacher a measure of the students' understanding of the big idea.

In the *Closing Activity*, students review the concept of order as understood in the context of Han Dynasty China and engage in an activity relating this concept to their own experiences.

## Multiple Abilities

In order to ensure access to learning, multiple ability tasks are incorporated in each of the activities. The following is a list of some of the multiple abilities that the students will need to complete the various activities in this unit:

- Linguistic abilities
  - understanding how a text fits into the big picture
  - translating the message of the text into another form
  - identifying the main point of the text
- Visual and spatial abilities
  - grasping the message of a picture
  - recognizing symbols
  - noting details in pictures
- Musical abilities
  - hearing and creating rhythmic patterns
  - hearing and creating melodies
- Dramatic abilities
  - expressing feelings, messages, and situations through acting

## Reference Materials

Cohen, Elizabeth G. *Designing Groupwork: Strategies for the Heterogeneous Classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1986.

# unit introduction

## Icons

For easier reference the following icon is used throughout the unit:

Background Information

## Endnotes

[1]John Fairbank, et. al. *East Asia : Tradition and Transformation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company), 73.

*Orientation Activity*

# THE CONCEPT OF ORDER

**Overview**

The purpose of the *Orientation Activity* is to acquaint students with the concept of order and how it can be found in many different facets of life.

**Objectives**

- to discuss the different types of order
- to discuss the importance of order and how different societies understood and applied it

**Time**

One class period

**Suggested Procedure**

1. Ask students what they think order means. Encourage them to think beyond the first thoughts that come to mind. Is there good order, for example? What happens when order is absent? Where is there more or less order?

2. The following examples show that you can find order virtually anywhere. What are some of the more creative examples your students come up with? Examples of order:

   - family
   - school
   - religion
   - economy
   - military
   - work
   - friendships
   - music
   - machines
   - math
   - dictionaries
   - sports

3. What does order do? Ask students some of the following questions to get them to think about the importance of order to their daily lives. In this unit they will be studying order in Ancient China. Some of the questions below have them look at order during other time periods and in different places.

   - What happens to societies when order breaks down? *(Possible Answers: Chaos, even revolution, may result when a society's order collapses. People may not listen to each other, resources may run out, or law might break down. However, the breaking down of order may also be regarded as a positive phenomenon if this occurs within a corrupt regime that results in its removal, thus creating a possibility of establishing a better society.)*
   - How have people imposed order on each other through the ages? *(Possible Answer: People and governments have imposed religious, economic, political, linguistic, racial, gender, and many other kinds of order on each other throughout history.)*
   - How have people ordered the world? *(Examples of this range from agriculture, which is an organized way of drawing food from the land, to mining and road-making.)*

## orientation activity

- Why is order differently expressed by different societies? *(Possible Answer: Order has to happen for people to live without the constant disruption of chaos. Some societies have a very flexible and natural sense of order, whereas others have a comparatively rigid, perhaps even military sense of order.)*





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*Activity One*

# THE POLITICAL ORDER: THE RULER

- *Activity One demonstrates the importance of order in the government of Ancient China, and in particular, in the manner by which a ruler should rule.*

All societies must confront and overcome the challenge of disorder, whether it comes from inside or outside of society. Ancient China was no exception. The Han Dynasty's concept of society was based on the view that people were distinguished by their status and office, and each person was accorded the treatment based on certain established theories and principles. The Han society could be structured like a pyramid, with the ruler at the apex, followed by the officials, and then the subjects or the people. The ruler earned his right to rule through the "Mandate of Heaven." This meant that his rule was backed by the forces of Heaven. An emperor who failed to provide for his people—even if through forces beyond his control—soon lost his mandate, and a new dynasty (ruling family) assumed power. The mandate was a further expression of the relationship between political and heavenly order. Thus Ancient China differed from many European societies in that the notion of sovereign political power did not exist and would not have been considered valid.

> Liu Bang was the first ruler of the Han Dynasty. He won the throne through a series of battles from which he emerged the victor.
> Once a man became established as an unchallenged victor and leader, he would legalize his position by acceding to his subjects' request that he would submit to enthronement as emperor; and in this way the mandate was 'conferred' on an incumbent who may have been unlettered, untrained and completely inexperienced in the tasks that lay before him.[1]

Liu Bang, also known by his posthumous temple name Gao Zu ("Eminent Progenitor"), and his immediate successors spent a lot of their energies in trying to consolidate a kingdom ravaged by war. By the time of Emperor Wu's accession to the throne in 141 B.C., the empire was in a position to expand and achieve a prosperity rivaled only by other strong dynasties in later times. Wu Di (*Di* means "emperor") undertook major projects such as the construction of a canal that facilitated the transport of grain from east China to the capital (Changan) and continued the expansion of the empire by conquering independent states in what are the modern provinces of Zhejiang and Fujian, and by defeating such enemies as the Xiongnu, a warlike nomadic tribe that lived in the north of China and a source of constant harassment. It was during his reign, too, that Confucianism became the official state ideology. After Emperor Wu, the Han empire never regained its power and strength. Life became harder for the people as heavy taxes were levied on them by the central government in order to maintain its military and support the capital. Rich generals and officials formed their own private armies and fought for dominance. In its last years, the empire disintegrated into three divisions, with each division ruled by contending rivals of power. The

empire officially ended in 220 A.D. after the son of one of the rivals usurped the throne and named his dynasty Wei.

## Outline of Activity

Students read some sayings taken from Confucius' *The Analects* and Dong Chongshu's *Deep Significance of the Spring and Autumn Annals,* two works that talk about the nature of a ruler's authority and its application. The students draw up their image of the ancient Chinese and discuss the questions found in the *Activity Card*. As a group they present a skit portraying the type of ruler needed in maintaining order in ancient Chinese society.

## Extension Questions

- How did the political order in Ancient China address the notion of order?
- How should an emperor rule, and what threatens his reign?
- What is the ruler's relationship to Heaven? To the people?
- What principles of order was the ruler to uphold?
- How can an emperor influence the people?
- What makes the ruler the highest example of virtue?
- What happens when the ruler is not virtuous?
- Do emperors improve life for the commoners?
- How did the dynastic cycle work?
- Would the prescriptions for how to rule work in your own society?

## Related Issues

- Power and authority
- Types of government
- Leadership
- Manner of choosing leaders

## Reference Materials

Fairbank, John K., et al. *East Asia: Tradition and Transformation*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989.

Loewe, Michael. *Chinese Ideas of Life and Death*. London: George Allen & Unwin Limited, 1982.

——. *Crisis and Conflict in Han China*. London: George Allen & Unwin Limited, 1974.

——. *Everyday Life in Early Imperial China: 202 B.C. -A.D. 220*. London: B.T. Batsford Limited, 1968.

Wang, Zhongshu. *Han Civilization*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982.

## Endnotes

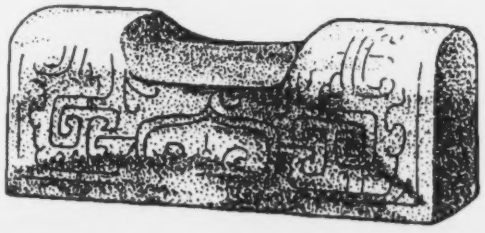
[1] Michael Loewe. *Everyday Life in Early Imperial China: 202 B.C. - A.D. 220* (London: B.T. Batsford, Limited), 31.

# POLITICAL ORDER: THE RULER ACTIVITY CARD

*Activity 1: The conduct of the ruler and the mandate from Heaven.*

The system by which emperors or empresses ruled Ancient China differed from the traditions of other societies. Han Dynasty rulers were not elected by popular vote, but assumed power through war, invasion, or heredity.

Chinese rulers were regarded as "Sons of Heaven," which meant that they acted as intermediaries between Heaven and their subjects. Their rule was justified by having earned the "Mandate of Heaven," which meant that their rule was supported by Heaven.



*This head-rest made of jade was found in the tomb of a king during the Han dynasty. The concept of order extended beyond the years of one's life for a king; this head-rest was meant to give him comfort during the afterlife. (Michael Loewe, Everyday Life in Early Imperial China: 202 B.C.-A.D. 220, 1968:33.)*

As a group, read the *Resource Card* and discuss the questions below:

1. How did the ancient Chinese view Heaven? Why was it important for the ruler to be in line with the forces of Heaven?
2. What kind of person was the ruler supposed to be?
3. What does it mean to rule by example? Why was the emperor supposed to rule by example?

## GROUP TASK

**Advisers and philosophers of the Han Dynasty and earlier dynasties often used stories to communicate their ideas. Make up a skit or write a story that shows how a ruler ought to behave in a certain situation. The skit or story should help explain the importance of the ruler in maintaining order in ancient Chinese society. Try to use a simple example in the same way that the passages in the handout do. Include a variety of characters such as peasants, wise men, the ruler, and officials.**



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# POLITICAL ORDER: THE RULER
# RESOURCE CARD (1 OF 2)

For as long as the ancient Chinese could remember, their rulers had been known as Sons of Heaven. Ancient Chinese thinkers advised the emperors to rule by example. The ruler's example was supposed to be good and full of *virtue*. The most important virtue was to care about others. When an emperor was a poor ruler, it was believed that natural disasters such as floods, droughts, and bad harvests followed. Then society might become restless and the kingdom could fall into disorder. Han people also believed certain fixed and similar laws govern both the cosmos and the earth. Only by following the laws of the cosmos in governing his kingdom will a ruler be able to govern peacefully.

A noted Han Dynasty Confucian scholar named Dong Chongshu wrote the following passage:

> The ruler holds the position of life and death over men; together with Heaven he holds the power of change and transformation. There is no creature that does not respond to the changes of Heaven. The changes of Heaven and earth are like the four seasons. When the wind of love blows, then the air will be mild and the world team with life, but when the winds of their disfavor come forth, the air will be cold and all things die. When they are joyous the skies are warm and all things grow and flourish, but from their wrath comes the chill wind and all is frozen and shut up.
>
> The ruler of men uses his love and hate, his joy and anger to change and reform the customs of men, as Heaven employs warm and cool, cold and hot weather to transform the grass and trees. If joy and anger are seasonably applied, then the year will be prosperous, but if they are used wrongly and out of season, the year will fail. Heaven, earth, and man are one, and therefore the passions of man are one with the seasons of Heaven. So the time and place for each must be considered.

(From Chongshu Dong, *Deep Significance of the Spring and Autumn Annals*, 1960. Cited in William Theodore DeBary, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 165.)

The following are passages taken from *The Analects*, a collection of Confucius' teachings:

> Confucius said, "Lead the people with governmental measures and regulate them by law and punishment, and they will avoid wrongdoing but will have no sense of honor and shame. Lead them with virtue and regulate them by the rules of

## POLITICAL ORDER: THE RULER
## RESOURCE CARD (2 OF 2)

propriety (li), and they will have a sense of shame and moreover, set themselves right. (II:3)

Zi Gong (a disciple) asked about government. Confucius said, "Sufficient food, sufficient armament, and sufficient confidence of the people." Zi Gong said, "Forced to give up one of these, which would you abandon first?" Confucius said, "I would abandon the armament." Zi Gong said, "Forced to give up one of the remaining two, which would you abandon first?" Confucius said, "I would abandon food. There have been deaths from time immemorial, but no state can exist without the confidence of the people.." (XII:7)

Confucius said, ". . . I have heard that those who administer a state or a family do not worry about there being too few people, but worry about unequal distribution of wealth. They do not worry about poverty, but worry about the lack of security and peace on the part of the people. For when wealth is equally distributed, there will not be poverty; when there is harmony, there will be no problem of there being too few people; and when there are security and peace, there will be no danger to the state . . . ." (XVI:1)





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## Political Order: The Ruler
## Individual Report

Name:_____

How do effective rulers help establish order in society?

*Activity Two*

# MUSIC IN HAN CHINA

- *Activity Two explores the use of music and the kind of order heard in music.*

The Bureau of Music was founded by the Han emperor Wu (141-87 B.C.) to contribute to the development of music, poetry, and literature. The Bureau's tasks were believed to have been "to collect popular songs from regions of the Han empire. . .and from foreign countries; to adapt and orchestrate popular songs; to compose new hymns and put them into music; to put existing texts to new, modern tunes; to set music compositions commissioned from famous poets. . .; to participate in, and perform at, religious and secular functions."[1] Content for the songs were culled from different sources, such as poetry and literary works of great poets or scholars. But folk songs and ballads that had been transmitted in the oral tradition through centuries among the common people had also provided rich text for Han Dynasty imperial music. These songs and ballads were often narrated while set to music (which is now lost), and the narrator often employed dramatic techniques to heighten the situation of the characters. The stories were usually centered around the lives and experiences of ordinary folks such as foot-soldiers, orphans, widows, or destitute husbands. Thus, the lyrics of these songs and ballads serve to show us glimpses of the Han Dynasty and its society.

> While we may enjoy the luxuriant exuberance of the Han rhapsody and formal odes eulogizing the regime, the songs and ballads remind us of the people whose labor underwrote the glittering opulence of the city and whose own life was likely to be spent in poverty. The lack of merry, carefree songs and ballads testifies to the ordinary person's miserable lot.[2]

Moreover, the emperors used these folk songs and ballads to gauge the sentiments of the people towards their government.

In the palaces, musical performances with instrumental accompaniment were received primarily by the emperor at ceremonial banquets and during other such gatherings. The people of the Han court, from the emperor, prince, and officials, to the court ladies and the aristocrats who came as guests, sometimes participated in the performance of songs and dances. However, the court employed a group of entertainers who stayed in the palace. These entertainers were trained through their own families who inherited their musical traditions and skills from their ancestors.

In 7 B.C. the Office was abolished as a result of pressure exerted by reformists. They viewed the Office as a waste of money and thought that it represented too much luxury on the part of the state. They also regarded some of the music as "likely to excite base emotions and to stimulate passions that were best restrained."[3] The edict read: "The

sounds of Cheng are of a licentious nature; they disturb and disorder music and were left in abeyance by the sage kings. The Office of Music is to be abolished."[4] Half of the 829 employees in the office were dismissed, and those retained only performed "old-style" music during state banquets and religious ceremonies.[5]

The following passage is taken from the *Han shu*, the standard history of the Han Dynasty compiled sometime before 100 A.D., and talks about the relationship between music and human behavior:

> The rules of behavior serve to moderate the people's feelings; music serves to bring harmony to their voiced expressions; administrative measures are used to induce certain types of behavior and punishments are used to prevent other types of activity. . . .
>
> By bringing order to human feelings, music attains some measure of uniformity; by regulating a man's relations to external matters, the rules of behavior establish appropriate differences of attitude. Uniformity results in harmony and friendship; differences of attitude engender awe and respect. With harmony and friendship there is no hatred; with awe and respect there is no strife. The attainment of order throughout the world by the practice of modesty and yielding place to others may be attributed to the rules of behavior and to music. These two ideals are practiced together and form a single unity.
>
> The intentions of awe and respect are difficult to observe; they are therefore displayed in the prescribed ways of offering a present, in declining or receiving a present; in the manner of ascending to a high place or descending; or in the conventions for sitting down or the formal salutation of others. The delights of harmony and friendship are difficult to express in material form; they are therefore brought out in poetry and song, in recitation and in speech, and by instruments such as bell or stone, pipe or strings. Music brings happiness to those who wish to show respect without involving material considerations; it lends beauty to feelings of joy without permitting an excessive indulgence in sound. This is why Kong Zi (Confucius) questioned whether the rules of behavior consisted simply in making expensive gifts of jade or silk, and whether music was no more than the sounds of bells and drums.
>
> These are the fundamental principles behind the rules for behavior and music; and this is why it is said: 'A man who understands the feelings of the rules of behavior and music is able to be creative; whereas a man who comprehends the patterns of the two is able to compile a written record. Those who are creative may be termed saints, and those who draw up records may be described as intelligent. Intelligence and saintliness are terms used in respect of the abilities to record and to create.'[6]

## Extension Questions

- What do these bells sound like? What images come to mind when you hear them?
- Do you think you hear the same thing that ancient Chinese heard?
- What were the bells probably made of?
- How do you suppose the bells were made? Who probably played them, and for whom? On what occasions do you think they were played?

# activity two: the musical order

- How does this music help you understand the meaning of "order" to the people who lived in ancient China?
- How does music communicate ideas and feelings?
- What should the purposes of imperial music be? What do you imagine this music to sound like?
- Do you think imperial music is extravagant in a society mostly made up of peasants and farmers?

## Outline of Activity

Students listen to music that originated from the Han Dynasty and read song lyrics. They discuss the relationship of order and music in Ancient China. Using objects found in the classroom or provided by the teacher, they compose and perform a ceremonial piece of music to convey the concept of order in Ancient China.

## Related Issues

- Popular and classical music
- Arts and Literature

## Reference Materials


Birrell, Anne. *Popular Songs and Ballads of Han China.* London: Unwin Hyman Limited, 1988.

Loewe, Michael. *Crisis and Conflict in Han China.* London: George Allen & Unwin Limited, 1974.

Meng, Chih. *Remarks on Chinese Music and Musical Instruments.* New York City: China Institute in America, 1932.

Watson, Burton, ed. *The Columbia Book of Poetry: from Early Times to the Thirteenth Century.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1984.


## Endnotes

[1] Anne Birrell. *Popular Songs and Ballads of Han China* (London: Unwin Hyman Limited), 6.
[2] Ibid., 5.
[3] Michael Loewe. *Crisis and Conflict in Han China* (London: George Allen and Unwin Limited, 1974), 178.
[4] Ibid., 202.
[5] Ibid., 179.
[6] A passage from the *Han shu*, Ibid., 177-178.

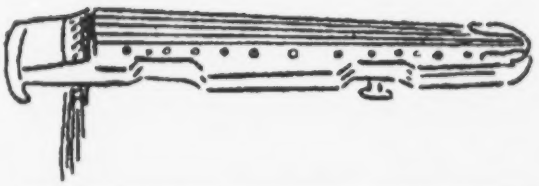
# MUSIC IN ANCIENT CHINA
# ACTIVITY CARD

*Activity 2: The musical order.*

One of the oldest instruments in the world is the Qin. With seven strings strung across a piece of wood, it was fragile and capable of producing many kinds of tones. The player could pluck, push, and pull the strings to create many different effects. The songs you hear on the tape are mostly sad songs. They were recreated from the Han period and played as scholars think they were written.

Qin

Seven Strings
4.5 feet long



*Picture from Chih Meng, Remarks on Chinese Music and Musical Instruments, 1932:12.*

As a group, read the *Resource Card*, listen to the tape, and discuss the questions below:

1. What effect did the music have on you? Why do you think a similar kind of music had such a big effect on Confucius?
2. How does music communicate ideas and feelings?
3. What should the purposes of imperial (royal) music be? Do you think imperial music has a purpose in a society mostly made up of peasants and farmers?
4. How did imperial music differ from the folk songs? How do both types of music reflect the world of the court and the world of the peasants?

## GROUP TASK

**As a group, compose and perform a ceremonial piece of music using the sounds produced by objects you can find in the classroom. Your group performance should communicate your impression of order in ancient China. It is up to you to decide whether or not there are any words. Share your performance with the class.**



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# MUSIC IN ANCIENT CHINA
# RESOURCE CARD

The commoners and aristocrats in Ancient China listened to different kinds of music. Commoners played very simple instruments, such as flutes and drums; they often sang songs while tending the fields and during festivities. The emperor and his officials, on the other hand, listened to music performed by trained musicians. These performances were much more extravagant; they usually took place during important ceremonies.

Confucius was an important thinker whose teachings were recorded by his students. Confucius had great influence on the Han Dynasty. Read the following passages from *The Analects* and the examples of song lyrics below.

*The Analects*

> The Master heard the *shao* [the music of Shun] in Qi and for three months did not notice the taste of the meat he ate. He said, "I never dreamt that the joys of music could reach such heights." [VII: 14]
>
> The Master talked of music to the Grand Musician of Lu, saying, "This much can be known about music. It begins with playing in unison. When it gets into full swing, it is harmonious, clear and unbroken. In this way it reaches the conclusion." [III: 23]
>
> The Master said, "Be stimulated by the *Odes*, take your stand on the rites and be perfected by music." [VIII: 8]

Examples of song lyrics

*Ground-Thumping Song*

When the sun comes up we work,

when the sun goes down we rest.

We dig a well to drink,

plow the fields to eat—

the Emperor and his might—what are they to us!

> (Reputed to be a song of very early times sung by peasant elders as they beat on the ground to keep time. Irregular.) Watson Burton, ed., *Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry*, 1984:70.

*If in a High Field*

If in a high field you plant dwarf wheat

It will never ever form ears of grain.

If a man lives in a strange village,

How can he fail to be unhappy?

Anne Birrell, *Popular Songs and Ballads of Han China*, 1988:52.

## activity two: the musical order

### MUSIC IN ANCIENT CHINA
### INDIVIDUAL REPORT

Name:_____

How does music have an order? How do you think people should listen to music?

How might music be used on particular occasions to help keep order in society?

*Activity Three*

# THE POLITICAL ORDER: THE SCHOLAR-OFFICIAL

- *Activity Three demonstrates the importance of order in the government of Ancient China, and in particular, in the way government officials should conduct themselves.*

In finding ways to establish order in its society, one of the Han Dynasty's apparently successful techniques was to bring wisdom into the government. Liu Bang (Han empire's first ruler), though uneducated himself, had seen the need to utilize men of education in governing the state. His successors followed his example by holding examinations to recruit these men to government service. Thus Ancient China's civil servants also came to be known as scholar-officials.

As early as the 5th century B.C., Chinese philosophers had been teaching that officials of the highest state should be men of moral integrity and intellectual capacity, and not necessarily of noble birth. Thus, a man from a poor family could still become a high official. In recruiting civil servants to the government, the Han Dynasty ordered every commandery to send candidates to the capital. "(F)or every 200,000 inhabitants in his commandery a governor was entitled to submit one candidate who had been chosen for his proven moral standards and devotion to family duties, . . ."[1] Once in the capital, these candidates were educated in the Confucian tradition in what was like a state university. Later on, they were subjected to a exam which would test their knowledge of Confucius' writings. At first, the exam required only that applicants be able to read the work of Confucius. Several centuries later the exam grew in sophistication. During the Tang Dynasty, for example, specialized institutions were created not only in the capital but also in the various districts and prefectures for local students to pursue their education. There were different categories of exams for different positions in the government. Candidates had to undergo a series of exams starting from the prefecture, then on to an examination given by the central government, and a final "palace examination," in which the final process of selection and appointment was made. This examination system is of interest to historians insofar as it demonstrated the importance of scholarship to the political world in Ancient China. At that time few societies around the world could lay claim to having as advanced a political system as this.

## Outline of Activity

Students read some sayings taken from Confucius' *The Analects* and discuss how a government official during the Han Dynasty was expected to think and behave. The students make up an exam to evaluate their classmates' understanding of the proper behavior of their superiors, e.g. parents and teachers.

## activity three: the scholar-official

### Extension Questions

- What kind of exams, if any, do you think political officials should have to take?
- What kind of officials should a country have? Should they be chosen on the basis of their knowledge of literature or philosophy, as the Chinese had done in the past?
- How did the ancient Chinese choose their officials? How do we choose our officials?
- How could exams such as the one taken by the ancient Chinese lead to effective and good leadership?
- What are the important characteristics of an official?
- What virtues did the ancient Chinese emphasize among their officials?

### Related Issues

- Bureaucracy
- Moral and/or effective leadership
- Government and its different branches

### Reference Materials


Fairbank, John K., et al. *East Asia: Tradition and Transformation*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989.

Loewe, Michael. *Chinese Ideas of Life and Death*. London: George Allen & Unwin Limited. 1982.

——. *Crisis and Conflict in Han China*. London: George Allen & Unwin Limited, 1974.

——. *Everyday Life in Early Imperial China: 202 B.C. -A.D. 220*. London: B.T. Batsford Limited, 1968.

Wang, Zhongshu. *Han Civilization*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982.


### Endnotes

[1] Michael Loewe, *Everyday Life in Early Imperial China: 202 B.C. - A.D. 220* (London: B.T. Batsford, Limited), 39.

# POLITICAL ORDER: THE SCHOLAR-OFFICIAL ACTIVITY CARD

*Activity 3: The process of selecting the scholar-official*

Officials who worked for the emperor were recruited into government service through examinations. A *civil service* exam was first developed during the Han Dynasty to help sort out who was good enough to work for the government. As one author wrote, "Reinforce education. When education is well established, the ruler and his descendants will be prosperous [wealthy]... Give examinations in order to select the best." (Dong Chongshu, ca. 100 B.C.) The early exams of the Han Dynasty were basically meant to check the officials' reading skills. Later, they became much more complicated and the Chinese political system became famous for its civil service exams.

*This picture of an official wearing robes and carrying a writing tablet is from a painting which dates from A.D. 182. (Michael Loewe, Everyday Life in Early Imperial China: 202 B.C.-A.D. 220, 1968:41)*

As a group, read the *Resource Card* and discuss the questions below:

1) What can you say about the kind of officials that the Han Dynasty had?

2) What steps could one take in order to become a "gentleman"?

3) Which of the passages you read apply to our officials these days?

4) How do these ideas about characteristics of a gentleman or a civil service worker contribute to order in the society?

## GROUP TASK

**List three positions of authority and leadership in your community or society and think of the qualities that a person holding a particular position should have. On butcher paper, write down all three positions and the corresponding qualities. When presenting your work to the class, compare and contrast the qualities your group has chosen with that of Confucius' teachings.**



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## POLITICAL ORDER: THE SCHOLAR-OFFICIAL RESOURCE CARD

*Confucianism* became the official government philosophy during the Han Dynasty. As far as the first century B.C. was concerned, the objectives of the government were to serve humanity, provide for human welfare and improve living conditions. It was believed that society can be improved by good leadership, that moral teachings and examples are better than coercion, and that physical punishment imposed on the individual by the government is not justified unless it was the last resort.

Officials were to be chosen for their virtues, rather than their wealth or status. Exams given to those interested in government positions required students to memorize the teachings of Confucius. Scholar-officials should try to become a *jun zi*, which can best be translated as "gentleman" or "nobleman." Through the cultivation of one's character and conduct, anyone could become a *jun zi*, even if he was born poor.

Below are some passages from *The Analects* which talk about the proper behavior and other teachings that a gentleman should follow:

The Master said, "Make it your guiding principle to do your best for others and to be trustworthy in what you say. Do not accept as a friend anyone who is not as good as you. When you make a mistake do not be afraid of mending your ways." [IX: 25]

Confucius said: "The gentleman understands what is right; the inferior man understands what is profitable." [IV: 16]

Confucius said: "The gentleman makes demands on himself; the inferior man makes demands on others." [XV: 20]

The Master said, "Do not worry because you have no official position. Worry about your qualifications. Do not worry because no one appreciates your abilities. Seek to be worthy of appreciation." [IV: 14]

Confucius said, "The (gentleman) has nine wishes. In seeing, he wishes to see clearly. In hearing, he wishes to hear distinctly. In his expression, he wishes to be warm. In his appearances, he wishes to be respectful. In his speech, he wishes to be sincere. In handling affairs, he wishes to be serious. When in doubt, he wishes to ask. When he is angry, he wishes to think of the resultant difficulties. And when he sees an opportunity for a gain, he wishes to think of righteousness." (XVI: 10)

## POLITICAL ORDER: THE SCHOLAR-OFFICIAL
## INDIVIDUAL REPORT

Name:_____

What characteristics should our government officials have?

How should we select them to be sure they have the characteristics you have described?

*Activity Four*

# ORGANIZING THE LAND IN ANCIENT CHINA

- *Activity Four shows how agriculture was an ordering of the land and/or society.*

Farming, or agriculture, is what distinguished the ancient Chinese of the Han Dynasty from the nomadic tribes that surrounded them. As many of the imperial decrees proclaimed, "the world is based on agriculture."

> The Lord Grand Secretary: If a private individual has an article of value, he places it in a box or cabinet and keeps it. Then what if a Ruler possesses the mountains and the seas? Now the sources of power and profit are assuredly in the mountain fastness and the depths of the marshes.[1]

Farming structured the lives of the common people and provided taxes to the state; a poor harvest caused by drought or floods was often blamed on the emperor. Famine was reason enough for the emperor to lose his "Mandate of Heaven." Life in China of two thousand years ago was dedicated to the earth.

Guang Zi is reported to have said:

> A country may possess a wealth of fertile land and yet its people may be underfed—the reason lying in lack of an adequate supply of agricultural implements.[2]

If the government failed in its management of agriculture, some degree of chaos was likely to deteriorate the stability of society. By increasing the gap between the rich and the poor, for example, excessive taxation by local lords and officials seriously threatened the reign of a ruler. Disasters such as floods and droughts, though completely beyond the control of any emperor, could also wreak havoc on the emperor's popularity. Such ill tidings meant that the emperor had fallen out of line with the cosmic forces of heaven. The more people there were to work on the soil, the fewer beggars and stragglers there were wandering about. This reduced the crime rate. Agriculture held people in place.

> The Literati: The material basis for economic prosperity is in the mountains and seas; life and death for the farmers lie in their implements of iron. When these arbiters of life and death are ready at hand to use, then enmity will perish; when enmity perishes, then waste land will be under cultivation; when waste land is cultivated, then grain ripens and the road to economic prosperity is opened; when the road to prosperity is opened, then the common people will be fed and their needs met; when the people's needs are met, then the nation is prosperous; when the nation is prosperous and instruction is given according to the rules of propriety, then there will be

> courtesy in giving way in passing on the road and the artisans and merchants will not compete with one another. Men will cultivate simplicity and sincerity, with the result that they will seek to share with others, and none will seek profit at the expense of another.[3]

The ancient Chinese had very advanced farming techniques. They had invented and put to use the iron plowshare two thousand years before it was introduced in Europe. This was partly due to their knowledge of casting iron, a technique in which molten iron is poured into molds rather than hammered into shape over an anvil. The use of the plowshare and the hoe to till the soil held in the moisture of the soil. Plowshares were pulled by animals—often horses, oxen or water buffalo. The wise construction of their plows allowed the Chinese to till the soil with only one animal; Europeans sometimes needed as many as six or eight to pull their more crudely designed plows. The difference spared money and time. (Chinese plows were brought to Europe by Dutch sailors in the seventeenth century.)

Han farmers primarily grew wheat and millet in the north, and rice in the south. They learned to plant their crops in furrows. This made the yield of their harvest much more predictable than it had been when they had simply cast the seed randomly over the soil. Furrows were moved every year so that the soil would not tire. Irrigation ditches were also devised to direct the flow of water from wells and rivers. Many families also owned livestock, from which they could get additional income. Horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, and fish-farms were among the most common. Some also harvested fruit, silk worms, and seasonings (such as ginger).

## Extension Questions

- How did the organization of farming affect the ancient Chinese?
- Why was successful agriculture a key to the ruler's power?
- What do you think made the Chinese advanced for their time in the use of farming implements?
- What kinds of disasters can disrupt farming?
- How do you think village life was ordered around agriculture?
- Why did the emperor extract taxes from the people in the form of farming products?
- Why is the domestication of livestock a significant aspect of life in ancient China?
- What kinds of meals do you think the Chinese ate?
- What were the advantages of irrigation, the plow, and other farming implements?
- What value were these agricultural tools and other inventions and techniques?

## Outline of Activity

Students read their *Resource Card* and view drawings of ancient Chinese agricultural techniques. They discuss the connection between agriculture and order during the Han Dynasty and create a model (using a shoe box) to show this relationship.

## Related Issues

- Taxation
- Land reform and private land ownership
- Poor and rich
- Agricultural economy

## Reference Materials

Fairbank, John K., et al. *East Asia: Tradition and Transformation*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989.

Gale, Esson M. *Discourses on Salt and Iron*. Leyden: E.J. Brill, Limited, 1931.

Loewe, Michael. *Everyday Life in Early Imperial China: 202 B.C. -A.D. 220*. London: B.T. Batsford Limited, 1968.

## Endnotes

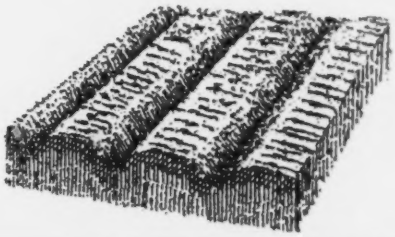
[1] Esson M. Gale, *Discourses on Salt and Iron* (Leyden: E.J. Brill Limited, 1931), 31.
[2] Ibid., 7.
[3] Ibid., 33.

# ORGANIZING THE LAND IN ANCIENT CHINA
## ACTIVITY CARD

*Activity 4: The ancient Chinese developed advanced farming techniques. Their knowledge of crops and their use of implements made cultivation of the land possible. Cultivation was a kind of order.*

As a group, read the *Resource Card* about agriculture in Ancient China and discuss the questions below:

1. How was agriculture important in maintaining order in ancient Chinese society?
2. What kind of order do you see in the pictures on the *Resource Card*?
3. How would you describe the relationship of the ancient Chinese to the land?



*This agricultural technique divided the land into six alternate furrows and ridges. Each was to be one foot wide and 240 feet long. (Picture from Michael Loewe, Everyday Life in Early Imperial China: 202 B.C.-A.D. 220, 1968:167.)*

## GROUP TASK

**In your group, discuss how the drawings show that agriculture represents a kind of organization. For example, think about the kinds of tools and knowledge the ancient Chinese needed to farm this way.**

**Using a shoe box filled with soil or sand, organize a peasant's plot of land to show the harmony of nature and organized agriculture.**



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# ORGANIZING THE LAND IN ANCIENT CHINA
## RESOURCE CARD #1

The *Zhuan* says, "When the princes take delight in profit, the ministers become mean; when the ministers become mean, the minor officers become greedy; when the minor officers become greedy, the people become thieves." (Esson Gale, *Discourses on Salt and Iron*, 1931:9.)

This agricultural tool is called a winnowing fork. This picture is taken from a Han mural in Kansu, China. (Picture from Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol. VI.2, 1954:366)

Agriculture, or farming, meant more to the ancient Han Chinese than simply plowing the soil and harvesting crops. Agriculture was a way of life that separated the people of the Han Dynasty from the wandering tribes around them. Peasant villagers who worked the land, planting wheat, millet, rice, and fruit trees, lived nearby their farms. They built long-lasting irrigation ditches to direct water to the crops. They devised ways of planting crops in furrows, and rotated crops to keep the earth rich in nutrients [food] for the plants.

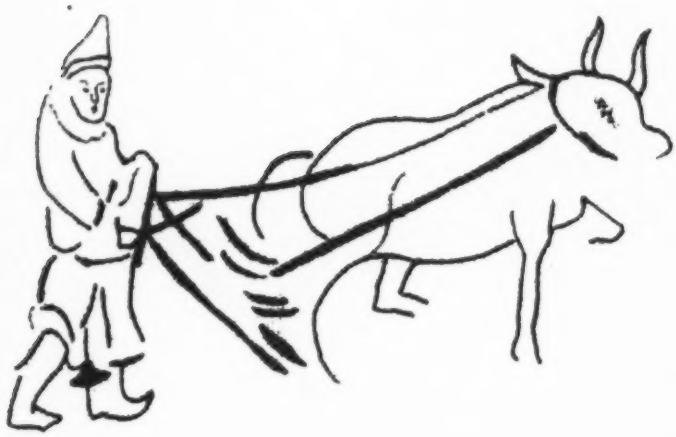
The advantage of this way of life to the ancient Chinese was clear. It kept people who might become vagabonds [wanderers] and criminals busy and gave them something to do. It maintained order in families and in the government. It fed people and sometimes provided extra food that could be stored for the future.

Here a writer comments on the importance of being efficient in agriculture, and the connection between agriculture and the maintenance of order in society.

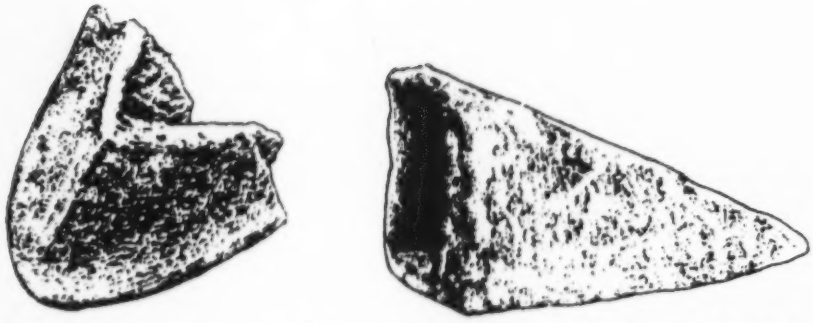
> Now all within the seas [Chinese lands] are united. The plenitude [plentiful amount] of land and people is not inferior to that of Tang and Yü [former dynasties] , and in addition we have not suffered from natural calamities [disasters] of flood or drought for several years. Why then are the stores of supplies so inferior? Because the land has benefits that have been overlooked and the people have untapped energies. There is still land suitable for growing grain that has not been brought under cultivation, resources of hills and lakes that have not been exploited, and vagrants who have not yet returned to agricultural pursuits. When the people are in poverty, then crime and evil-doing are born. Poverty is bred of insufficiency which is caused by lack of agriculture. If men do not farm, they will not be tied to the land; and if they are not tied to the land, they will desert their villages, neglect their families, and become like birds and beasts. Then although there be high walls and deep moats, strict laws and severe punishments, they still cannot be held in check.
>
> —Chao Cuo, from *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, p. 214.

# ORGANIZING THE LAND IN ANCIENT CHINA
# RESOURCE CARD #2

**The drawings below show Chinese agricultural techniques**



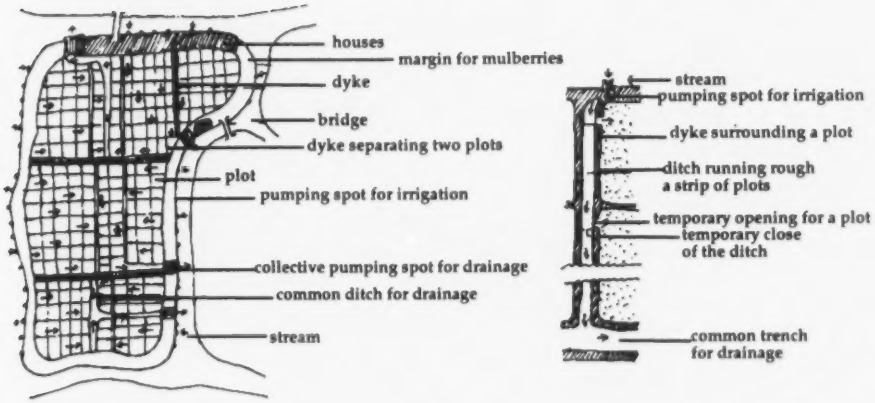
Han seed-drill. Apparently a two-tube drill. Note the long shafts and the sturdy construction of the stilts. (Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China, Vol. VI*:2, 1954:262.)

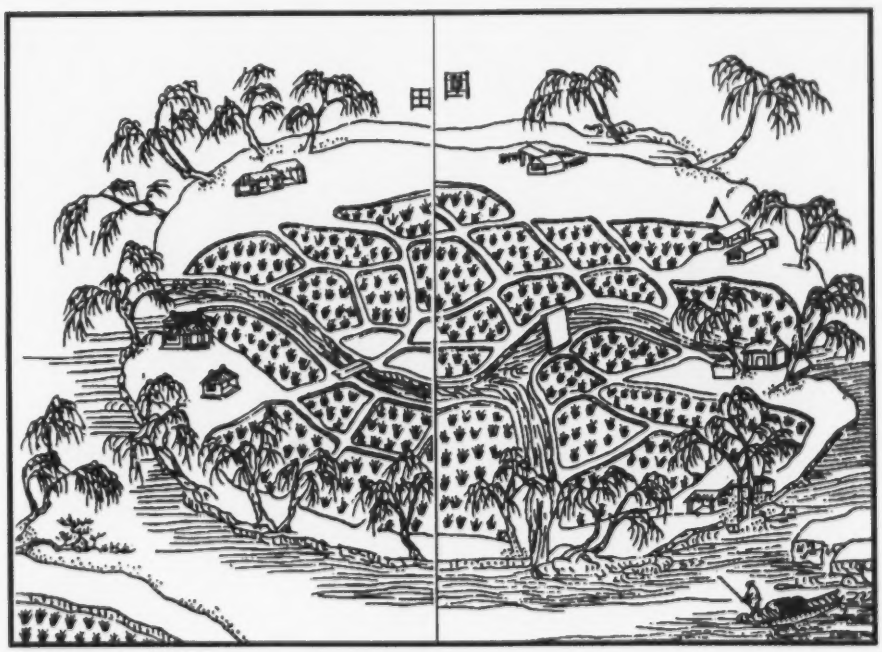


Han seed-drill (Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China, Vol. VI*:2, 1954:262.)

# ORGANIZING THE LAND IN ANCIENT CHINA
# RESOURCE CARD #3

**The drawings below show Chinese agricultural techniques**

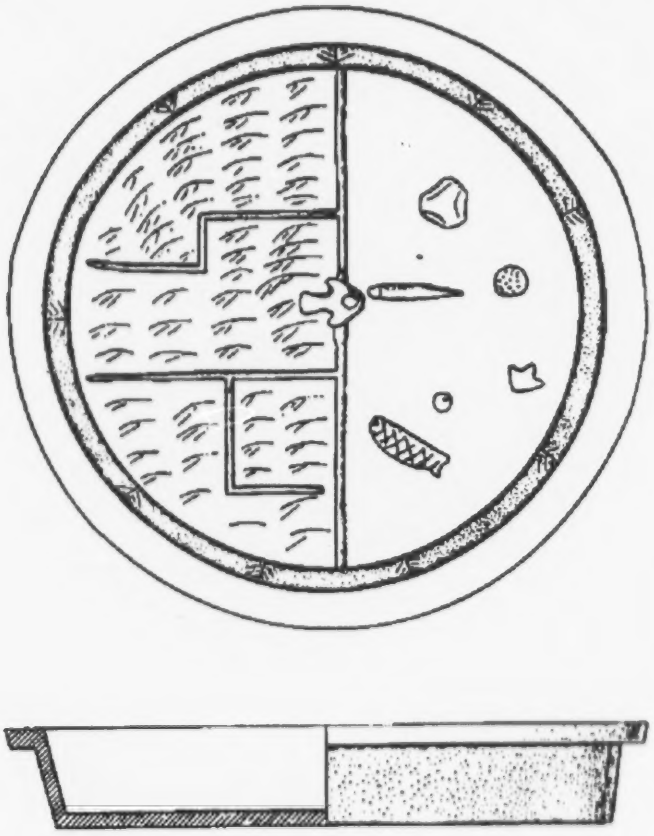


Dyked fields (Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China, Vol. VI*:2, 1954:115, 119.)

# ORGANIZING THE LAND IN ANCIENT CHINA
## RESOURCE CARD #4

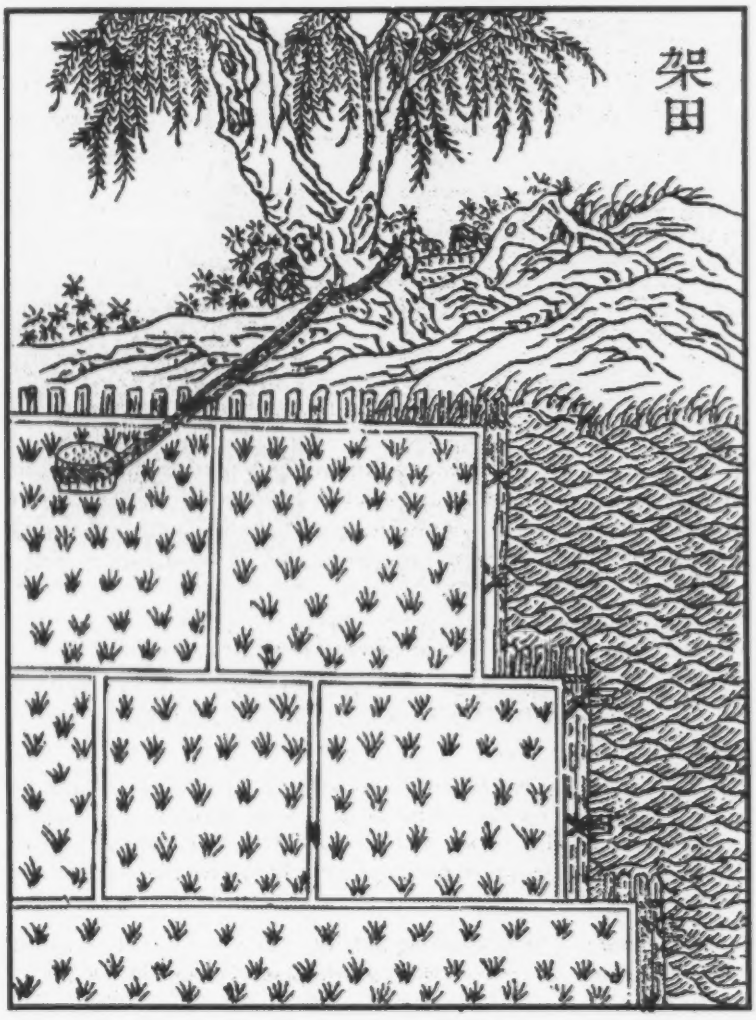
**The drawing below shows a Chinese rice field**



Han model of a rice field from Guizhou. The seedlings are set in rows. The right hand section represents the irrigation tank and contains fish, water caltrops and other aquatic plants. (Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China, Vol. VI*:2, 1954:280.)

# ORGANIZING THE LAND IN ANCIENT CHINA
## RESOURCE CARD #5

**The drawing below shows a Chinese field in South China. This field is not typical, and is called *jiatian* or framework field. It was built on a scaffold floating in the water (note the mooring rope).**




(Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China, Vol. VI*:2, 1954:120.)

# Organizing the Land in Ancient China
## Individual Report

Name:_____

How does agriculture relate to the concept of order in ancient Chinese society?

*Activity Five*

# CONFUCIUS AND THE VIRTUOUS ORDER

- *Activity Five explores the value of Confucius' teachings in establishing order in society.*

Why were Confucius' doctrines institutionalized? Confucius was certainly in good standing among powerful political figures. But there also seemed to be a sincerity and wisdom to his words. Although his teachings were not as explicitly "religious" as the beliefs in mythic spirits popular among many ancient Chinese, Confucius himself had "a sense of appointment by heaven to restore order out of chaos and to relieve the people from their suffering."[1] To achieve this end, he spent his life as a private teacher and reformer.

Born in 551 B.C. in the state of Lu (modern-day Shandong province), Confucius became interested in learning early, at age fifteen. The death of his father when Confucius was three and his family's poverty forced him to begin working when he was very young, but he was able to obtain a great deal of knowledge through self-education. Confucius believed that knowledge is wisdom, and wisdom would allow for the betterment of society and the individual. He found close parallels between education and government, and thought that the best way for the ruler to instruct his people was by virtuous example. In this obligation to moral behavior the emperor was held in check by the very teachings he spread among the people. The emperor's popularity waned quickly when it was believed that his unvirtuous doings were the cause of material privation. Confucius' ideas about government were based on "the inviolable sanctity of the individual," therefore making government's purpose to ensure the people's happiness and enlightenment.

Much of Confucius' life story are later inventions. Confucius was said to have aspired himself to government office so that he could implement his reforms; one of the main ways he wanted to restore order to government and also to men was through moderation—avoiding unnecessary wars, lowering taxes, decreasing punishments. Although his teachings were to become official government doctrine for over 2000 years, legend has it that Confucius himself was forced to cut short his political career. He had to resign his position as high minister of Lu because of jealousy and intrigue on the part of neighboring states. Then in his 50's, he spent thirteen years traveling and teaching throughout the Chinese states, and during this time he had approximately 3000 pupils and disciples. At age 67 he returned to Lu, where he devoted the remainder of his life to editing classical texts and continued teaching.

Confucius' own ideas were later to become a classical text in *The Analects*, a work written by his disciples about his sayings and activities. The passages in *The Analects* are famous for their brevity and utter

simplicity. They seem to speak of essential truths and values, and were easily grasped by the ancient Chinese. These values uphold honorable conduct among strangers, impose codes of behavior that seem mutually agreeable to a majority of the population, and essentially help a society run without recourse to coercion or enforcement.

Confucius' teachings were based on the concept of *ren*, the Chinese word for humanity, or love of man. *Ren* was the measure of a man's greatness, and the superior man was one who cultivated aesthetics and morality through music and decorum and fully developed Confucian virtues, such as loyalty, reciprocity, and filial piety.

These virtuous concepts grew to become widely accepted rules for behavior; for instance filial piety cemented the duty of the son to the father into concrete code. When rules were broken, father and son alike referred to Confucius' principles.

The Confucian world order is a hierarchical one. Every person has a place in society, and each status has a prescribed set of norms and behavior which everyone should follow. To go against these norms would upset the balance of cosmic order and create chaos and disorder. While each person had his place in society he also had a corresponding duty, and for "superior men" (a status obtained by merit, not birth) this duty was government service. Confucius' belief that good government resulted from superior men leading the rest of the people was the basis for China's civil service examinations.

## Extension Questions

- What might the hierarchy of ancient China look like?
- How should the common person behave?
- What kind of social order does Confucius portray?
- What characterizes filial piety?
- What are some of the virtues the ancient Chinese considered valuable?
- What do you think the ancient Chinese family was like?
- What kind of life was an individual supposed to lead, according to Confucius' teachings?
- What could you learn from the ancient Chinese today? Give some examples.
- What did Confucius teach about women and their role in society?

## Outline of Activity

Students read some passages taken from Confucius' *The Analects* and discuss Confucius' teachings on proper and moral behavior among people. Students present an activity showing the different approaches to a conflict and ask their classmates to choose the approach that corresponds most closely to Confucius' teachings.

## Related Issues

- Parental authority
- Civil disobedience
- Law and morality

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[1] *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed., 540-43.

# CONFUCIUS AND THE VIRTUOUS ORDER ACTIVITY CARD

*Activity 5: Confucius' teachings about virtue and order in society*

One of Confucius' main teachings was the creation of order in society. In order to achieve this, Confucius taught that people must play their assigned roles within a fixed set of social relationships. He taught that the "ruler be a ruler and the subject a subject, the father be a father and the son a son." For each of these relationships, there were prescribed norms (standards) of behavior that everyone should strive to follow.

*Confucianists emphasized filial piety as an essential virtue. This Han stone engraving (from second century A.D.) illustrates a famous story, in which "Old Lai-tzu" shows his seventy-year-old parents that seventy is not old, by dressing and playing like a young child. (John Fairbank, East Asia: Tradition and Transformation, 1989:45)*

As we have mentioned in Activity One, an educated person should strive to be a *jun zi*, or a gentleman. Confucius taught his disciples the proper behavior and attitude of a true gentleman. He also taught how fathers should treat their sons and how sons should treat their fathers. By encouraging everyone to follow a set of ethical norms, order in society could be maintained or restored.

As a group, read the *Resource Card* and discuss the questions below:

1. What kind of order did Confucius think society ought to have? What kind of society do you think Confucius would have disliked?
2. What was the appeal of Confucius' teachings?
3. Do you think a society can work if people follow Confucius' teachings?

## GROUP TASK

**Think of situations in which a conflict happens between two or more persons. Discuss how Confucius would resolve these conflicts. Then, present to the class by way of a skit how Confucian values were used in resolving these conflicts.**

## CONFUCIUS AND THE VIRTUOUS ORDER RESOURCE CARD (1 OF 2)

Confucius was born in 551 B.C. into poverty and misery. He lived in a society in which corruption and chaos were rampant. Throughout his lifetime he sought to reduce human suffering and point the way to happiness. He valued the right and duty of every individual to make his or her own decisions, and sought out honest and intelligent people, regardless of how rich or poor they were.

At the heart of his philosophy was the idea of *ren*, translated as virtue, love, or human-heartedness. It meant to "love people," in a way that means to care for others' welfare in much the same way that you would care for your own. Other values related to *ren* that Confucius thought all people had in common were loyalty, courage, wisdom, and trustworthiness. Educated people, especially the officials, were all encouraged to follow these virtues in the attainment of a just and humane society.

Confucius' teachings tell us about how he thought human relationships should be in society. Certain types of behavior were supposed to govern the relationship between the emperor and his subjects, a father and his son, a brother to his brother, and a husband to his wife.

Here are some passages in which Confucius taught about the proper conduct between fathers and sons:

> Young men should be filial when at home and respectful to their elders when away from home. They should be earnest and faithful. They should love all extensively and be intimate with men of humanity. When they have any energy to spare after the performance of moral duties, they should use it to study literature and the arts. (I:6)

> Meng Yizi asked about filial piety. Confucius said, "Never disobey." (Later,) when Fan Chi was driving him, Confucius told him, "Meng-sun asked me about filial piety, and I answered him, "Never disobey." Fan Chi said, "What does that mean?" Confucius said, "When parents are alive, serve them according to the rules of propriety and sacrifice to them according to the rules of propriety." (II:5)

> Zi-yu asked about filial piety. Confucius said, "Filial piety nowadays means to be able to support one's parents. But we support even dogs and horses. If there is no feeling of reverence, wherein lies the difference?" (II:7)

> Confucius said, "In serving his parents, a son may gently remonstrate with them. When he sees that they are not inclined to listen to him, he should resume an attitude of reverence

## CONFUCIUS AND THE VIRTUOUS ORDER RESOURCE CARD (2 OF 2)

and not abandon his effort to serve them. He may feel worried, but does not complain." (IV:18)

Confucius said, "When his parents are alive, a son should not go far abroad; or if he does, he should let them know where he goes." (IV:19)

Confucius said, "A son should always keep in mind the age of his parents. It is an occasion for joy (that they are enjoying long life) and also an occasion for anxiety (that another year is gone)." (IV:21)

And how should people treat one another? Here are some passages:

Confucius said, ". . .Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you. . . ." (XII:2)

Si Maniu, worrying, said, "All people have brothers but I have none," Zi Xia said, "I have heard (from Confucius) this saying: '. . .If a superior man is reverential (or serious) without fail, and is respectful in dealing with others and follows the rules of propriety, then all within the four seas (the world) are brothers.' What does the superior man have to worry about having no brothers?" (XII:5)

Someone said, "What do you think of repaying hatred with virtue?" Confucius said, "In that case what are you going to repay virtue with? Rather, repay hatred with uprightness and repay virtue with virtue." (XIV:36)

Confucius said, "There are three kinds of friendship which are beneficial and three kinds which are harmful. Friendship with the upright, with the truthful, and with the well-informed is beneficial. Friendship with those who flatter, with those who are meek and who compromise with principles, and with those who talk cleverly is harmful." (XVI:4)

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## CONFUCIUS AND THE VIRTUOUS ORDER
## INDIVIDUAL REPORT

Name:_____

What does Confucius think relations between people should be?

What should relationships be based on?

*Activity Six*

# ORDER IN LANGUAGE

- *Activity Six examines the order in language.*

Few cultures have developed an alphabetic writing system such as the one we use and take for granted. The written language developed in Ancient China bears little resemblance to alphabetic writing. The forms of writing which students will find in this activity date back to oracle bones dating from the Shang Dynasty (c. 1500-1100 B.C.). These characters were carved into animal bones or tortoise shells for the purpose of divination. The resource card shows how they changed through time to become the characters as they are written today.

Even before the Han Dynasty was established in 202 B.C., the system of Chinese writing had evolved in China some 1500 years before. However, during the Han Dynasty, the need of the government to achieve a strong central government made it essential for the Han rulers to create a standardized form of writing with which to circulate its policies, and the writing style the dynasty developed underwent little change until 1911.

The Han Dynasty contributed to China's literature by experimenting with new forms and styles of prose and poetry. For instance, the role of poetry was expanded when it began to be written for pure lyrical delight, as well as for its traditional uses as instruction and musical accompaniment. Furthermore,

> (A)s a result of the activities of the writers and scholars of the Han period over 9000 characters were included in China's first dictionary, presented to the throne in A.D.121. . . . [1]

This order through language was formed not only by creating simpler, more accessible characters, but also by creating a more inexpensive and readily available material for those characters to be written on—paper (A.D. 105). This new material enabled people to become educated more quickly, and greater numbers of them to write.

Chinese writing is ordered differently. In the West, people express words in writing by analyzing how they sound and reproducing these sounds with the use of any or a combination of the 26 letters. Thus, the spoken word "man" is spelled with the three letters m, a , and n. This principle of writing words based on their sound is suitable for Western languages, for words are constantly being changed and inflected depending on their function in a sentence, e.g., "man" (singular) as compared to "men" (plural). However, the Chinese language is monosyllabic, i.e., every single word in its vocabulary consists only of one syllable. Furthermore, every word has one "immutable word body" whose stem does not change in a sentence. For example, both "man" and "men" have the same monosyllabic and immutable character, *ren*. Thus,

for those who created the Chinese writing system, the method of using alphabets was unattractive; instead, the method they used was to create signs or pictures to convey words, e.g., man was written as 人, which signifies a man walking with two legs. In this way, we can see that Chinese characters, in their initial stages, were not phonographic but ideographic.[2]

Over the centuries, Chinese characters have evolved and can be grouped into six different categories. As we have discussed above, the oldest characters comprise the first and smallest group, called pictographs—simple drawings that look like the object they represent, e.g., sun, horse, or tree. However, as pictographs had certain limitations, such as in conveying abstract ideas, a second category, called ideographs, was created. An example of this is the character 三, which is the symbol to convey the number three. A third category which may be called "hybrids," combines existing pictographs and ideographs. For example, the pictographs for "sun" and "moon" are placed together to create a new character meaning "bright" (now 明). As the Chinese writing system became more complex and sophisticated, a kind of phonetic writing was created in which homonyms were given similar characters. An example is the character for "to come." Pronounced as *lai*, it has the same pronunciation as "barley," which was written in ancient times as 來. Because it was difficult to create a character for the abstract "to come," the character for "barley" was used for "to come" (now 來). Another category may be called "loan characters." In this category, a word that is not synonymous to another character but sounds very much like the latter "borrows" a graph or radical from it. For example, the character for scorpion was once drawn this way , showing head, tail, claws, and legs and pronounced *wan*. Another word meaning "ten thousand" was spoken but had no corresponding character. The character for *wan* (scorpion) was borrowed to signify "ten thousand" and has now developed into the modern character 萬 for "ten thousand." The sixth and most numerous category capitalizes on existing characters' widespread pronunciations as well as their existing meanings, with compounds that use one character to convey a well-known sound and another to convey a well-known meaning. For example, there is a graph which signifies "hand" (a drawing with five fingers). Then there is the graph 口which is pronounced as *kou* and means "mouth." Now, there is a word meaning "to beat" that has the same pronunciation (*kou*). The ancient Chinese came out with a character for "to beat" by adding the graph "hand"手 to *kou* the mouth to indicate that the word *kou* (now 扣) that means "to beat" is done with the hand, and not with the mouth *kou*.

Extension Questions

- What kind of order is expressed by language?
- Does this order depend on who is speaking?
- Is order in language different when written and spoken?
- Can order in language be translated?
- What is this order like for people who have been brought up with more than one language?

# activity six: language

## Outline of Activity

Students read and discuss the nature and development of Chinese characters based on the *Activity* and *Resource Cards*. They come up with their own characters using the method of developing pictographs and ideographs.

## Related Issues

- Order in spoken language
- Sign language
- Other forms of communication

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## Endnotes

[1] Michael Loewe. *Everyday Life in Early Imperial China: 202 B.C. - A.D. 220* (London: B.T. Batsford, Limited), 88-89.
[2] Bernhard Karlgren. *The Chinese Language: An Essay on Its Nature and History* (New York: The Ronald Press Company), 3-10.

# ORDER IN LANGUAGE
## VOCABULARY

| | |
|---|---|
| Character | Logographic symbol in the Chinese writing system which represents an object, idea, concept, or sound. |
| Ideograph | A picture or symbol used in a writing system to represent an abstract idea which is suggested by the picture or symbol. Also known as an "ideogram." |
| Phonetic | A component of a Chinese character that suggests how the character is pronounced. |
| Pictograph | A picture or symbol used in a writing system to directly represent an object. Also know as a "pictogram." |
| Signific | A component of a Chinese character that indicates the character's meaning or general category of meaning. |

# ORDER IN LANGUAGE ACTIVITY CARD

*Activity 6: Order reflected in the Chinese language*

The alphabet you are reading uses a series of letters. When combined properly, the letters form words. The Chinese language is completely different—"characters," and not words, are the building blocks of the Chinese language. Unlike letters, which mean nothing until they are formed into words, each Chinese character represents a complete idea. Some Chinese characters either be classified as pictographs or ideographs. Maybe you can see the roots of the word: *pict* as in picture, *graph* as in draw. Ideographs do not visually resemble the ideas they convey, but can be made up of two or more pictographs to represent an idea. The majority of Chinese characters fall under the category of signific-phonetic. This means that the characters are made up of compound characters or radicals, with one character (or radical) conveying a well-known sound and another conveying a well-known meaning.

As a group, read the *Resource Card* and discuss the questions below:

1. What did these Chinese characters originally look like? What advantages and disadvantages can you see in words that began by representing things as pictures?
2. What can you learn about the Chinese from the pictographs you see on the resource cards?
3. How might it be difficult to translate Chinese into other languages? Do you think people who use different languages have different thoughts?
4. What were some of the reasons the characters changed over time?
5. How is the Chinese concept of order reflected in their written language?

## GROUP TASK

Examine and discuss the characters you see on the resource cards. Pay special attention to how the characters evolved from pictures to pictographs, or how they are formed by combining two characters. Think of two original ideas and invent characters and pronunciations for them. Create one pictograph, one ideograph, and one signific-phonetic character, using the resource cards for clues on what radicals you wish to use in your original characters.

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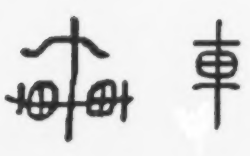
## ORDER IN LANGUAGE
## RESOURCE CARD #1 (1 OF 2)

Over the centuries, Chinese characters have evolved and can be grouped into six different categories. The oldest characters comprise the first and smallest group, called pictographs—simple drawings that look like the object they represent, e.g., sun, horse, or tree. However, as pictographs had certain limitations, such as in conveying abstract ideas, a second category, called ideographs, was created. An example of this is the character 三, which is the symbol to convey the number three. A third category which may be called "hybrids," combines existing pictographs and ideographs. For example, the pictographs for "sun" 日 and "moon" 月 are placed together to create a new character meaning "bright"明 .

The characters you will be reading below are pictographs. Look at them and see if you can match the older form of the character with its modern form.

| meaning | gradual evolution | modern form |
|---|---|---|
| sun | | 車 |
| tree | | 日 |
| person | | 口 |
| mouth | | 人 |
| field | | 木 |
| cart/vehicle |  | 田 |

## ORDER IN LANGUAGE
## RESOURCE CARD #1—ANSWER KEY (2 OF 2)

| | |
|---|---|
| sun | 日 |
| tree | 木 |
| person | 人 |
| mouth | 口 |
| field | 田 |
| cart/vehicle | 車 |

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# ORDER IN LANGUAGE
# RESOURCE CARD #2

Some Chinese words can tell us something about the way in which ancient Chinese viewed their world. Earth, for example, was called "Under Heaven." Like a footprint, our language gives away our identity.

Some examples of signific-phonetic characters are shown below. Use them in drawing your characters.

| *phonetic* | *meaning* | *pronunciation* |
|---|---|---|
| 馬 | horse | ma |

| *signific* | *meaning* | *character* | *meaning* | *pronunciation* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 女 | woman | 媽 | mother | ma |
| 玉 | jade | 瑪 | agate | ma |
| 虫 | insect | 螞 | ant | ma |
| 口 | mouth | 罵 | scold | ma |

## OTHER EXAMPLES

| *phonetic* | *pronunci-ation* | *signific* | *meaning* | *character* | *meaning* | *character pronunci-ation* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 化 | hua | 艸 | grass | 花 | flower | hua |
| 包 | bao | 食 | food | 飽 | full (eaten enough) | bao |
| 口 | kou | 手 | hand | 扣 | to beat | kou |
| 尼 | ni | 氵 | water | 泥 | mud | ni |

# ORDER IN LANGUAGE
# INDIVIDUAL REPORT

Name:_____

What can you learn about Ancient China from the examples of characters you have seen here?

*Closing Activity*

# ORDER AROUND US

**Overview**

Students will have the opportunity to reflect upon their own experiences in relation to the concept of order. Using their own imagination in drawing their understanding of order or cutting out pictures from magazines, students will be able to point out the various manifestations of order in their school, community, or society.

**Time**

One class period

**Materials**

- White typewriting paper, one sheet per student
- Markers
- Color pencils
- Glue
- Scissors
- Old magazines or newspapers

**Suggested Procedure**

1. Review with your students the different ways with which the Han Dynasty created order in their society. How was order reflected in their government, music, relationships, land, writing system, and gardens? Ask them why it is important to have order in society. What happens if there is no order? What are the necessary ingredients to create order? *(Possible Answers: There are several, such as a system of rules or regulations, or an implementing body.)* How is order created? Who decides what rules to follow or systems to create?

2. Divide the class into groups of five. To each group distribute the typewriting paper and the other materials. Tell students that they are to draw or cut out from the magazines or newspapers pictures symbolizing order in their society today. From these pictures, ask them to create a collage. Give them around 20 minutes to finish this.

3. Instruct the students to share their drawings or collages with their group mates. Tell them also to imagine what would happen if these did not exist.

4. Conclude the class by giving the class specific feedback and questions about some of their works and discussion. The following are suggested questions to facilitate the discussion:

   - How do we maintain order in our society? Do we find differences or similarities with the way the Han people ordered theirs?

   - What is the role of our government in keeping order in our society? What about the role of the family, of the school, or of other institutions? What is your role?

## closing activity

- Can you identify areas in our country and in other parts of the world that need to establish order? If yes, how could this be accomplished?



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